



Behavioral Health Coordination and Communication Act of 2021

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Background

COVID-19 has laid bare an existing mental health crisis in our country. As we take a hard look across the care continuum, we see many areas that require substantial improvement. One of the contributing problems is the siloed nature of our mental health system. At the federal level, we find redundancy in programs across different agencies and a lack of strategic thinking to ensure our federal government moves in a unified direction. The result is state and local governments that struggle to create evidence-based programs that will meet their community's needs and improve access to care.

About the Legislation

The Behavioral Health Coordination and Communication Act would:

- Create an Interagency Coordinator for Behavioral Health to inventory currently disjointed federal programming and to develop a strategy for coordination across agencies to streamline the federal government's approach to mental health and substance use disorders (SUD);
- Task the Interagency Coordinator with identifying best practices for comprehensive mental health and SUD care;
- Establish a publicly available knowledge center on mental health and SUD, including insurance information, tools, and other public education efforts;
- Direct the Interagency Coordinator to produce public reports and recommendations for improving gaps in the mental health and SUD workforce, mental health and SUD services, service reimbursement in schools, and expenditures for services for justice involved youths; and
- Promote efforts to destigmatize mental health and SUD and incorporate mental health and SUD screenings as a vital sign.

Support

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American Art Therapy Association, American Association on Health and Disability, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Inseparable, Lakeshore Foundation, SMART Recovery, The Kennedy Forum, Well Being Trust